

Message Text

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SUBJECT: CRITICISM OF US DELEGATION TO KING GUSTAF'S FUNERAL

BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED

SUMMARY: DURING AND AFTER KING GUSTAF'S FUNERAL THERE WAS LITTLE MEDIA COMMENT ON THE US DELEGATION, UNTIL OCT. 7 ARTICLE IN SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PAPER WHICH BLASTED DELEGATION AS "HAWKS" AND AN INSULT TO SWEDEN. ARTICLE SAYS THAT OTHERS OF MORE UNDERSTANDING COULD HAVE BEEN CHOSEN AND THAT COMPOSITION INDICATES THAT NIXON AND KISSINGER INTEND CONTINUE US-SWEDEN "COLD WAR". END SUMMARY.

1. PRIOR TO OCT. 7 SWEDISH MEDIA HAD VERY LITTLE COMMENT ON US DELEGATION TO KING GUSTAF'S FUNERAL, THOUGH STRAIGHT NEWS COVERAGE WAS PLENTIFUL AND FAVORABLE. ONE PROVINCIAL PAPER, MALMO SYDSVENSKA DAGBLADET (LIBERAL), ON SEPT. 22 EDITORIALIZED: "WE HAVE NOTHING AGAINST THESE PERSONS (US DELEGATION), BUT IT SEEMS RATHER ODD THAT PRESIDENT NIXON IN THIS WAY TAKES OPPORTUNITY TO CONTINUE HIS DEMONSTRATIONS AGAINST SWEDEN. LACKING AN AMERICAN AMBASSADOR IN SWEDEN, PRESIDENT SHOULD AT LEAST HAVE LET HIMSELF BE REPRESENTED ON CABINET LEVEL."

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2. FULLEST AND MOST CRITICAL COMMENT APPEARED IN MAJOR

SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PAPER AFTONBLADET OCT. 7 HEADLINED "NIXON AND KISSINGER INSULTED SWEDEN AT KING'S FUNERAL". ARTICLE IS BY RESIDENT AMERICAN JOURNALIST ROBERT SKOLE, A FREQUENT CRITIC OF US POLICY. HIS FULL (INSIDE) PAGE ARTICLE ARGUES THAT WHITE HOUSE CHOSE FOUR "HAWKS" FOR FUNERAL DELEGATION IN ORDER TO SHOW THAT COLD WAR BETWEEN US AND SWEDEN IS STILL ON.

3. SKOLE COMMENTS ON FACT THAT ALL OF DELEGATION EXCEPT FORMER AMBASSADOR HOLLAND WERE OF SWEDISH DESCENT, AND HOLLAND'S PRESENCE MERELY UNDERLINED FACT OF EMPTY AMBASSADORIAL POST AT STOCKHOLM. IF SWEDISH DESCENT WERE A NECESSITY, HE SAYS, THEN OTHERS BESIDES "HAWKS" SHOULD HAVE BEEN CHOSEN SUCH AS SENATOR MAGNUSON OR CONGRESSMAN JOHN ANDERSON FROM ILLINOIS. FURTHER, IF THEY HAD REALLY WANTED TO IMPROVE RELATIONS THEY WOULD HAVE SENT SENATORS KENNEDY, FULBRIGHT, HUMPHREY, OR MCGOVERN. SKOLE RECALLS HE INTERVIEWED CONGRESSMAN JOHNSON IN 1968 AND FOUND HIM HIGHLY CRITICAL OF SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC POLICY IN SWEDEN, A "DIEHARD CONSERVATIVE". ARTICLE CONCLUDES: "WITHOUT WANTING TO INSULT THE FOUR PEOPLE WHO WERE SENT, I ASSERT THAT THEY CLEARLY REFLECT THE OLD NIXON-KISSINGER LINE: COLD WAR WITH SWEDEN.... OUT OF YEARS OF BOORISH BEHAVIOR IN WASHINGTON, THIS MOVE WAS ONE OF THE MOST BOORISH AND MOST DEGRADING FOR THE AMERICAN PEOPLE". END UNCLASSIFIED

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4. COMMENT: SKOLE IS NOT A SPOKESMAN FOR SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY, AND IT IS UNLIKELY THAT THE AFTONBLADET EDITORS SOUGHT PARTY CLEARANCE BEFORE PUBLISHING ARTICLE. THIS ARTICLE IS A RATHER EXTREME EXPRESSION OF A CERTAIN DISAPPOINTMENT FELT IN SOME PARTS OF SOCDEM PARTY, AND INDEED IN OTHER PARTIES, THAT SOMEHOW THE OCCASION OF THE FUNERAL COULD HAVE BEEN AN OPPORTUNITY FOR IMPROVING RELATIONS BUT WASN'T. SWEDES IN GENERAL, AND PARTICULARLY GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS AND POLITICIANS, WERE NOT REALLY EXPECTING A CABINET-LEVEL DELEGATION, AND A NUMBER COMMENTED FAVORABLY ON DELEGATION CHOSEN. BUT THERE WAS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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STILL THE HOPE IN MANY QUARTERS THAT THERE WOULD BE SOME SORT OF SYMBOLIC STEP TOWARD AN AMELIORATION OF RELATIONS. PERHAPS THE SPECIAL COURTESIES SHOWN ADM. BURKE AND REP. JOHNSON EVIDENCED THAT HOPE. THERE IS NO REASON TO BELIEVE THAT PRIMIN PALME EITHER SHARED THE HOPE OR FEELS THE DISAPPOINTMENT. BEYOND ROUTINE CORDIALITY HE MADE NO SPECIAL EFFORT TO MAKE ANY POINTS WITH US DELEGATION.

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